



Abraham Lincoln Photo Lab

Abe's oldest chief, Master Chief Aviation Boatswain's Mate Danny Silvestre (left), Command Master Chief William Nissen (center) and the ship's youngest chief, Electronics Technician Shawn Ritchie cut the birthday cake in celebration of the 108th birthday of U.S. Navy chief petty officers during a birthday celebration held by Abe's Chief Petty Officers Mess.

Abe Chiefs celebrate 108th

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On the ball fields of Naval Station Everett, the USS Abraham Lincoln Chief Petty Officers Mess gathered April 6 to celebrate 108 years of chief petty officers in the Navy.

With more than 70 chief petty officers gathered around, Command Master Chief William Nissen, along with Air Department's Master Chief Aviation Boatswain's Mate Danny Silvestre and Chief Electronics Technician Shawn Ritchie of the Reactor Department, cut the Mess' birthday cake.

"Being a chief petty officer has been one of the most important things in my life," said Nissen. "And our ship is the way it is because of the Chiefs."

Quoting former Chief of Naval Operations, Adm. Frank B. Kelso, Nissen stressed how Kelso felt chief petty officers were the reason for the success in his naval career and served as inspira-

tions to the younger Sailors today.

"Adm. Kelso said chiefs proved their worth each day," said Nissen. "Now the constant challenge is to re-affirm their commitment to their Sailors and the Navy."

"I think there are two huge challenges facing the CPO community as we begin the 21st century," said Chief Electronics Technician Susan Stankis of Combat Systems. "The first is the expectation from the highest levels of command to keep young people in the Navy. We must be forward thinking and open to new ideas while at the same time maintaining traditions and discipline."

"The second challenge is to become technologically adept. Every day new tools are being introduced through the Internet that will greatly enhance the information available to all hands. Today's sailor is sophisticated in a way that we never were. They've grown up expecting computers to become quicker and

more versatile. Today's CPO needs to keep abreast of the latest cutting edge technology available to us all."

According to another Abe chief petty officer, Adm. Kelso was right on target by saying much of the Navy's success can be attributed to the CPO community.

"The Chiefs have a direct impact on how the Navy performs," said Chief Intelligence Specialist Tom Nank of the Operations Department. "Anything successful that the Navy has done, can be attributed to its Sailors, and that means that those Sailors have, at some point, been successfully influenced by a Chief."

As the Abraham Lincoln Chiefs' Mess begin the ship's planned incremental availability at the Puget Sound Naval Shipyard, Nissen displayed confidence that the shipyard time would be productive and safe as he reminded the Mess that chief petty officers together can never lose.